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11/20/2013 Minutes

Minutes for the ABAC meeting of November 20, 2013
Approved Dec. 18, 2013

Board members attending were Ron Sender, Jack Johnson, Doug Greenfield, Scott Smith, Stephan Miller and Christopher Tonkin. Phil Goff was absent. Also present were Joey Glushko, Stephen Quinn, Charlie McCabe and David Fields.

Introductions were made all around.

*Approval of the minutes of the October meeting. The minutes of the October meeting were approved after amendments were made.

Reports on activities

Report of TAC activities on CLAMP. Scott reviewed the latest design for the Pleasant St./Mass. Ave. intersection. He summarized the Public Information Meeting, reviewing the design, as largely positive. The biggest complaint voiced at the meeting was the placement of the westbound bike lane along the curb. Several people suggested redesigning the project to include a cycle track rather than bicycle lanes. There were also some suggestions about the locations of the crosswalks. Christopher told us that he submitted ABAC's letter of support for the redesign to MassDOT. Scott then told us that the root heaves on the eastern end of the Bikeway will be repaired if the temperatures this week rise above 40 degrees.

Report to the Board of Selectmen meeting on December 2. Christopher will make a presentation to the Selectmen reviewing the Toole Design report on Bikeway way-finding and amenities. Joey mentioned that a key component of the Toole Design recommendations is that a joint committee be established, with membership from all the Bikeway towns, that will be responsible for unifying standards of design and implementation of Bikeway improvements.

Bikeway User Guidelines. The Guidelines were submitted to the Town Manager's Office in August. Joey told us that the Town Manager approves of the guidelines but has to work out the procedures for the approval, in his office, of applications to use the Bikeway for large events.

Letter to the Bedford Board of Selectmen. Jack hasn't finished the drafting of this letter. Joey thought a mention should be made about not antagonizing the abutters along the path. The letter was supposed to outline our experience with the gap in the Bikeway in Arlington Center and how this experience applies to the gap between the Minuteman Bikeway and the new Reformatory Branch Trail in Bedford. We agreed that the two road configurations are not analogous. There is much less traffic and no signals in the Bedford gap, so we proposed they use the obvious on-road connection. Christopher suggested that we send the letter to Terry Gleason and the Bedford Bicycle Committee for review before we send it to the Bedford BOS.

Fall Bike Tour/community event planned jointly with the Medford Bicycle Committee. David summarized the current status of the project, which is in the early planning stage. Doug suggested that it would be advantageous to set a date ASAP. David then gave us a summary of the activities currently being undertaken by the Medford Bicycle Committee.

Friends of the Bikeway for the Minuteman Bikeway. Charlie McCabe gave us a summary of his qualifications for starting a Friends group. He has a long history in bicycle advocacy. He would like to establish a Minuteman Bikeway Friends Group to raise funds for the upkeep and improvement of the entire length of the Bikeway. He would also like to set up a permanent fund, supported by an annual membership, for this purpose. He has experience in setting up such a fund and outlined various ways to achieve this end. Christopher mentioned that the Bikeway goes through three towns and wondered how the inter-town politics would be handled. The final structure of the group remains to be seen but would undoubtedly draw from the three primary Bikeway towns. Charlie asked us if we have a priority list of maintenance and improvements to the Bikeway that require funding. Jack suggested that the Toole Design report provides a list of projects that could be funded in this manner. Scott suggested we should start with a Friends group in Arlington and eventually expand it to the other towns. Ron agreed that we should start locally.

Planning for the Winter Social. Stephen suggested that the speaker could be George Reynolds of Derry N.H., who manufactures human powered vehicles. We decided that we would like to pursue this idea. Joey will contact George and try to arrange a mutually acceptable date.

Bikeway Spring Cleanup. Stephan asked that ABAC set a date for the Spring Cleanup. We considered factors such as probable weather and conflicts with other events around town. We decided to risk the last Saturday in April (April 26) even though there are probably other events scheduled on that day. Stephan will start publicizing after the first of the year to get things rolling early.

Other items. A letter was written to the Board of Selectmen about traffic backups on Lake St. caused by the Bikeway Crossing. The other issue mentioned by Scott is that the crossing beacon at the Mill St./Bikeway intersection is malfunctioning and has some design flaws. Scott then told us that for the Lake Street/ Bikeway crossing, one solution being considered by the TAC working group might be to place a stoplight at the Bikeway crossing synchronized with the stoplight at Brooks Ave. Christopher suggested that a traffic officer, on duty during the evening rush hour, might be a better way to facilitate traffic at that intersection. Stephan suggested that the problem of cars so often stopping when no pedestrian or cyclist is in the crosswalk is a consequence of drivers not knowing that path users are expected not to enter the intersection until it is safe to do so. This contributes to the traffic back-up.

Jack updated us on the recent Moving Together Conference. He felt that the conference was very upbeat. He told us that the conference this year, for the first time, included discussion of rapid transit. An important topic discussed at the conference is the difficulty of facilitating the use of alternative transportation without the help of local advocacy groups like ABAC.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:04 pm.

*Notes that a vote of the board was taken.

Minutes submitted by Stephan Miller.